

## **Testimony of Frank DaCato, Training Coordinator**

**United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 777**

### **Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee**

Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian, members of the appropriations committee. My name is Frank DaCato Training Coordinator for Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 777 and I am also a member of the State Apprenticeship Council. I would first like apologize for not attending today's session in person; however I would like to thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony. I have been involved with apprenticeship training for 30 years, first as a registered plumbers apprentice then from approximately 1984 as an instructor then in 1998 as Local 777's apprenticeship coordinator. I am writing this in opposition to Governor's Bill 6370 for the following reasons.

As you may be aware in 2004 the Department of Labor's staff was cut from 14 to 1. At that time a registration fee of \$55 per apprentice was instituted to help with rehiring staff and with defraying some of the cost of the running the program. Although this caused a financial burden on our program (local 777 and its members in 2008 have paid over \$9,000 in registration fees) we were happy to help with our fair share. Now one of the bills proposals is to double the fees, this would cause a great hardship on our organization at this time. The bill also proposes to send this money into the General Fund where it would be lost to other programs and not to be used as its original intend. Again this would cause a cut in staff funding which would make it more difficult to register apprentices which would mean less income from registrations and more importantly less of an opportunity for the apprentice to complete their program since, especially in the licensed trades, an apprentice must meet minimum required on the job registered hours before being allowed to sit for the test. The bill also proposes transferring apprenticeship over to a Middle College System and taking it out of the Department of Labor. Currently with apprenticeship in DOL, it is very easy for state apprentice coordinators to discover if an apprentice is being treated legally under our Davis Bacon Laws or if state apprenticeship statutes are even being followed. By moving apprenticeship these coordinators will lose access to this vital information.

I do not want to take too much of you time so I will close by again asking you to reject Bill 6370. If you have any questions please call at 203-294-4118 or e-mail me at [fdacato@local777.com](mailto:fdacato@local777.com). I will be more than happy to help in anyway I can.

**Respectfully Submitted February 17, 2009,**

**By Frank J. DaCato Training Coordinator**